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Charter trustees

In England and Wales, **charter trustees** are set up to maintain the continuity of a town charter or city charter after a district with the status of a borough or city has been abolished, until such time as a parish council is established. Duties are limited to ceremonial activities such as the election of a mayor, and various other functions depending upon local customs and laws.

The charter trustees are made up of local councillors in the district representing wards within the boundaries of the town/city. If there are fewer than three district councillors for the former borough, then qualified local electors may be co-opted to make the number up to three.

Charter trustees must hold an annual meeting within twenty-one days of the annual meeting of the district council. The first item of business is the election of a town or city mayor and deputy mayor for the next year. The charter trustees of Lowestoft failed to nominate any candidate for the office of town mayor for several years until a change of political control in 2003, the trustees being effectively in abeyance. The charter trustees of Worksop are also effectively in abeyance, having not elected a town mayor for over 30 years.

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History

Local Government Act 1972

The original bodies of charter trustees were set up in 1974, under section 246 of the Local Government Act 1972. The concept was introduced into the Bill by a government amendment in September 1972.[1]

Section 245(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 allowed the 'shadow' district councils to make a petition to the Queen for borough status, before their coming into effect on 1 April 1974. In this case, if "it is signified on behalf of Her Majesty before that date that She proposes to accede" to the request then, the style of borough could be used immediately from 1 April 1974, despite the fact that the charter would be presented only later.

For the new districts which made no such petition (or where it was refused), for each former municipal borough in the district, which was not to become a successor parish, a body corporate styled the charter trustees of the town or city, were established, under section 246(4) of the Act.

In the original legislation, charter trustees could also be formed in Welsh Districts, but the **Charter Trustees Order 1974**, which provided for the establishment of the trustees, stated that the section *"shall not apply to the area consisting of the counties established by section 20 of the Act (new local government areas in Wales)"*, and *"there will be no charter trustees in Wales."*[2]

Charter Trustees Act 1985

Originally, under section 246(7), when the district in which a town for which charter trustees had been established gained the status of a borough, the trustees would be immediately dissolved. Some new district councils petitioned for borough status soon after 1 April 1974, quickly dissolving the charter trustees.

This was changed by the **Charter Trustees Act 1985**, which provided that charter trustees would cease to exist only when a parish council was formed for the area of the former borough.

Local Government Act 1992

Legislation passed in 1992 led to the establishment of Local Government Commission whose remit was to review the system created in 1974. As a result there was a partial reorganisation, with a number of districts with borough or city status being abolished. The mechanism of creating charter trustees to preserve civic traditions was again used. However, trustees were created only where an outgoing council requested their establishment. The failure of the extinguished City of Rochester-upon-Medway council to appoint charter trustees for Rochester or to apply for Rochester's city status to be transferred to the replacement unitary authority of Medway led to Rochester losing its city status.

Some abolished boroughs such as Beverley included a large rural area. In such cases, the charter trustees were not established for the entire area of the former borough, but were limited to that part of the new authority which was unparished: the area identifiable as the town.

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

A further wave of reorganisations came into effect in some areas of England on 1 April 2009, under the terms of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The reforms saw the creation of new unitary authorities and the abolition of a number of districts with city or borough status. The Charter Trustees Regulations 2009 allow for the creation of trustees to preserve civic traditions in those areas where there is no obvious successor parish council. In the case of the cities of Chester and Durham the charter trustees area are identical to the entire abolished district, which includes not only the central unparished area but also the surrounding parishes.[3]

List

Former municipal borough	Successor district	County in 1974	Website	Created	Parished/abolished
Andover	Test Valley District	Hampshire		1974	abolished 1976, successor the Borough of Test Valley[4]
Aylesbury	Aylesbury Vale	Buckinghamshire	[1] (http://www.aylesburytowncouncil.gov.uk/)	1974	parished 2000[5]
Banbury	Cherwell	Oxfordshire	[2] (http://www.banbury.gov.uk)	1974	parished 2000[6]
Basingstoke	Basingstoke District	Hampshire		1974	abolished 1978, successor the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane[7]
City of Bath	Bath and North East Somerset	Avon	[3] (http://www.mayorofbath.co.uk/the-charter-trustees-of-the-city-of-bath)	1996[8]	extant
Bedford	Bedford District	Bedfordshire		1974	abolished 1975, successor the Borough of North Bedfordshire[9]
Beverley	East Riding of Yorkshire	Humberside	[4] (http://www.beverley.gov.uk/pages/page.asp)	1996[8]	parished 1999[10]
Bexhill-on-Sea	Rother	East Sussex		1974	extant
Bootle	Sefton	Merseyside		1974	abolished c. 1975, successor the Borough of Sefton
Bournemouth		Dorset		2019[11]	extant
Bridgwater	Sedgemoor	Somerset		1974	parished 2003
Burton upon Trent	East Staffordshire	Staffordshire		1974	abolished 1992 when East Staffordshire became a borough [5] (http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=12336&strquery=East%20Staffordshire#s22) unparished area became various parishes in 2003

Former municipal borough	Successor district	County in 1974	Website	Created	Parished/abolished
Chelmsford	Chelmsford District	Essex		1974	abolished, 1975, successor the Borough of Chelmsford
City of Chester	Cheshire West and Chester	Cheshire		2009[12]	extant
Chippenham	North Wiltshire	Wiltshire	[6] (http://www.chippenham.gov.uk/)	1974	parished 1984[13]
Cleethorpes	Cleethorpes District	Humberside		1974	Abolished 1975, successor the Borough of Cleethorpes
Cleethorpes	North East Lincolnshire	Humberside		1996[8]	extant
Colne	Pendle district	Lancashire		1974	Abolished 1976, successor the Borough of Pendle
Crewe	Cheshire East	Cheshire		2009[12]	parished 2013
Crosby	Sefton	Merseyside		1974	abolished c. 1975, successor the Borough of Sefton
Dartford	Dartford district	Kent		1974	Abolished 1977, successor the Borough of Dartford
Daventry	Daventry district	Northamptonshire	[7] (http://www.daventrytowncouncil.gov.uk/)	1974	parished 2003
Deal	Dover district	Kent	[8] (http://www.deal.gov.uk/)	1974	parished 1996
Dover	Dover district	Kent		1974	parished 1996
Dunstable	South Bedfordshire	Bedfordshire	[9] (http://dunstable.gov.uk/)	1974	parished 1985
City of Durham and Framwelgate		County Durham		2009[12]	extant
East Retford	Bassetlaw	Nottinghamshire		1974	extant
Ellesmere Port	Cheshire West and Chester	Cheshire		2009[12]	extant
Folkestone	Shepway	Kent		1974	parished 2004

Former municipal borough	Successor district	County in 1974	Website	Created	Parished/abolished
Goole	Boothferry	Humberside		1974	Abolished 1978, successor the Borough of Boothferry
Grantham	South Kesteven	Lincolnshire		1974	extant
Great Grimsby	North East Lincolnshire	Humberside		1996[8]	extant
Hemel Hempstead	Dacorum District	Hertfordshire		1974	Abolished 1986, successor the Borough of Dacorum
City of Hereford	Herefordshire	Herefordshire	[10] (http://www.herefordcitycouncil.gov.uk/)	1998[14]	parished 2000
High Wycombe	Wycombe	Buckinghamshire	[11] (https://web.archive.org/web/20040511061336/http://www.mayoroffwycombe.co.uk/)	1974	extant
Ilkeston	Erewash	Derbyshire		1974	abolished 1975, successor the Borough of Erewash
Kidderminster	Wyre Forest	Worcestershire		1974	parished 2016
King's Lynn	West Norfolk district	Norfolk		1974	Abolished 1981, successor the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
City of Lichfield	Lichfield district	Staffordshire	[12] (http://www.lichfield.gov.uk/)	1974	parished 1980
Lowestoft	Waveney	Suffolk		1974	parished 2017
Lymington	New Forest district	Hampshire		1974	parished (as four parishes) 1979
Macclesfield	Cheshire East	Cheshire		2009[12]	parished 2015
Maldon	Maldon	Essex	[13] (https://web.archive.org/web/20060106165657/http://www.maldon.info/maldo	1974	parished 1987

Former municipal borough	Successor district	County in 1974	Website	Created	Parished/abolished
			ntc/)		
Mansfield	Mansfield district	Nottinghamshire		1974	extant
Margate	Thanet	Kent	[14] (http://www.margate.org.uk/)	1974	extant
Nelson	Pendle district	Lancashire		1974	Abolished 1976, successor the Borough of Pendle
Newark	Newark district	Nottinghamshire	[15] (http://www.newark.gov.uk/)	1974	parished 1980
Newbury	West Berkshire	Berkshire	[16] (http://www.newbury.gov.uk/)	1974	parished 1997
Penzance	Penwith	Cornwall		1974	parished 1980
Poole		Dorset		2019[11]	extant
Queenborough-in-Sheppey	Swale district	Kent		1974	parished 1976?
Ramsgate	Thanet	Kent	[17] (https://web.archive.org/web/20091008014830/http://www.ramsgatetc.kentparishes.gov.uk/)	1974	parished 2009[15]
Royal Leamington Spa	Warwick district	Warwickshire	[18] (http://www.leamingtonspatowncouncil.gov.uk/)	1974	parished 2002
Royal Tunbridge Wells	Tunbridge Wells district	Kent		1974	Abolished 1974, successor the Borough of Tunbridge Wells
City of Salisbury (New Sarum)	Salisbury district	Wiltshire	[19] (http://www.salisburycitycouncil.gov.uk/)	1974	parished 2009
Scunthorpe	North Lincolnshire	Humberside		1996[8]	extant

Former municipal borough	Successor district	County in 1974	Website	Created	Parished/abolished
Southport	Sefton	Merseyside		1974	abolished c. 1975, successor the Borough of Sefton
Taunton	Taunton Deane District	Somerset		1974	abolished 1975, successor the Borough of Taunton Deane
Taunton		Somerset		2019[11]	extant
Weston-super-Mare	Woodspring (now North Somerset)	Avon	[20] (https://web.archive.org/web/20040509055303/http://www.weston-super-mare towncouncil.gov.uk/)	1974	parished 2000
Workington	Allerdale	Cumbria		1974	parished 1982
Worksop	Bassetlaw	Nottinghamshire		1974	extant
Yeovil	Yeovil district (now South Somerset)	Somerset	[21] (https://web.archive.org/web/20040430095359/http://www.yeoviltown.com/Static/Town_Council/)	1974	parished 1984

Changes in April 2009

The structural changes to local government in 2009 affected charter trustees. Trustees were formed in a number of new unitary authorities to preserve the mayoralty and civic traditions of abolished boroughs. At the same time, the charter trustees of Salisbury were dissolved on the parishing of the area.

New Authority	Boroughs or cities abolished	Charter trustees formed
Cheshire East	Borough of Congleton	Borough is completely parished. Charters and civic property likely to pass to Congleton Town Council.[16]
	Borough of Crewe and Nantwich	Charter Trustees for Crewe. (The ward of Crewe East and the unparished parts of the wards of Crewe West, Crewe North, and Crewe South.)[17]
	Borough of Macclesfield	Charter Trustees for Macclesfield. (Wards of Broken Cross, Macclesfield Town, Macclesfield West, and the unparished parts of the wards of Macclesfield Forest, and Prestbury and Tytherington).[17]
Cheshire West and Chester	City of Chester	Charter Trustees for the City of Chester, with lord mayoralty preserved. (area identical to abolished City of Chester District)[17][18]
	Borough of Ellesmere Port and Neston	Charter Trustees for Ellesmere Port formed as a temporary measure before creation of town council.[17][19][20]
	Borough of Vale Royal	Borough is entirely parished.
Cornwall	Borough of Restormel	No action was taken, and borough status ceased on 31 March 2009[21]
County Durham	City of Durham	Charter trustees for the City of Durham[17][22] (area identical to abolished City of Durham local government district)
	Borough of Sedgefield	Privileges and rights relating to the borough charter transferred to Sedgefield Town Council.[23]
Northumberland	Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed	Civic functions of the Mayoralty and Shrievalty and all associated regalia were transferred to Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council (created 1 April 2008).[24]
	Borough of Blyth Valley	Area divided into three parishes of Blyth, Cramlington and Seaton Valley.[25]
	Borough of Castle Morpeth	The borough is entirely parished.
Shropshire	Borough of Oswestry	The borough is entirely parished.
	Borough of Shrewsbury and Atcham	Shrewsbury Town Council formed 1 April 2009[26]
Wiltshire	Salisbury District	Existing charter trustees of the City of New Sarum will be dissolved with the creation of civil parish and Salisbury City Council in June 2009.[27]

Changes in 2019

Charter trustees were established in April 2019 for Bournemouth, Poole and Taunton as a consequence of local government structural changes in Dorset and Somerset.[11]

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External links

- An article about Charter Trustees from the City of Bath (https://web.archive.org/web/20040408194830/http://www.thecityofbath.co.uk/charter_trustees.htm)

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